ASSEMBLY BILL No. 2535

Introduced by Assembly Member Hernandez

February 21, 2008

An act to amend Section 14105.45 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to Medi-Cal.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2535, as introduced, Hernandez. Medi-Cal: prescription drugs.

Existing law establishes the Medi-Cal program, which is administered by the State Department of Health Care Services and under which qualified low-income persons receive health care services, including prescription drugs. Existing law requires the department to, among other things, establish a list of Maximum Allowable Ingredient Costs (MAIC) for drugs provided under the Medi-Cal program, to update maximum allowable ingredient costs at least every 3 months, and to notify Medi-Cal providers at least 30 days prior to the effective date of a maximum allowable ingredient cost.

Existing law authorizes the department to, notwithstanding other provisions of existing law that governs administrative procedures, implement these provisions by means of a provider bulletin or notice, policy letter, or other similar instructions, without taking regulatory action.

This bill would delete this provision.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 14105.45 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

14105.45. (a) For purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) "Average manufacturers price" means the price reported to the department by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services pursuant to Section 1927 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1396r-8). In the event an average manufacturer's price is not available, the department shall use the direct price as the average manufacturer's price.

(2) "Average wholesale price" means the price for a drug product listed in the department's primary price reference source.

(3) "Direct price" means the price for a drug product purchased by a pharmacy directly from a drug manufacturer listed in the department's primary reference source.

(4) "Estimated acquisition cost" means the department's best estimate of the price generally and currently paid by providers for a drug product sold by a particular manufacturer or principal labeler in a standard package.

(5) "Federal upper limit" means the maximum per unit reimbursement when established by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and published by the department in Medi-Cal pharmacy provider bulletins and manuals.

(6) "Generically equivalent drugs" means drug products with the same active chemical ingredients of the same strength, quantity, and dosage form, and of the same generic drug name, as determined by the United States Adopted Names (USAN) and accepted by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as those drug products having the same chemical ingredients.

(7) "Legend drug" means any drug whose labeling states "Caution: Federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription," "Rx only," or words of similar import.

(8) "Maximum allowable ingredient cost" (MAIC) means the maximum amount the department will reimburse Medi-Cal pharmacy providers for generically equivalent drugs.

(9) "Innovator multiple source drug," "noninnovator multiple source drug," and "single source drug" have the same meaning as

those terms are defined in Section 1396r-8(k)(7) of Title 42 of the United States Code.

(10) "Nonlegend drug" means any drug whose labeling does not contain the statement referenced in paragraph (7).

(11) "Selling price" means the price used in the establishment of the estimated acquisition cost. The department shall base the selling price on the average manufacturer's price plus a percent markup determined by the department to be necessary for the selling price to represent the average purchase price paid by retail pharmacies in California. The selling price shall not be considered confidential and shall be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(b) (1) Reimbursement to Medi-Cal pharmacy providers for legend and nonlegend drugs shall consist of the estimated acquisition cost of the drug plus a professional fee for dispensing. The professional fee shall be seven dollars and twenty-five cents ($7.25) per dispensed prescription. The professional fee for legend drugs dispensed to a beneficiary residing in a skilled nursing facility or intermediate care facility shall be eight dollars ($8) per dispensed prescription. For purposes of this paragraph "skilled nursing facility" and "intermediate care facility" shall have the same meaning as defined in Division 5 (commencing with Section 70001) of Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations.

(2) The department shall establish the estimated acquisition cost of legend and nonlegend drugs as follows:

(A) For single source and innovator multiple source drugs, the estimated acquisition cost shall be equal to the lowest of the average wholesale price minus 17 percent, the selling price, the federal upper limit, or the MAIC.

(B) For noninnovator multiple source drugs, the estimated acquisition cost shall be equal to the lowest of the average wholesale price minus 17 percent, the selling price, the federal upper limit, or the MAIC.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (2), the department shall establish a list of MAICs for generically equivalent drugs, which shall be published in pharmacy provider bulletins and manuals. The department shall update the list of MAICs and establish additional MAICs in accordance with all of the following:

(A) The department shall base the MAIC on the mean of the average manufacturer's price of drugs generically equivalent to the particular innovator drug plus a percent markup determined by the department to be necessary for the MAIC to represent the average purchase price paid by retail pharmacies in California.

(B) The department shall update MAICs at least every three months and notify Medi-Cal providers at least 30 days prior to the effective date of a MAIC.

(c) The department shall update the Medi-Cal claims processing system to reflect the selling price of drugs not later than 30 days after receiving the average manufacturer's price.

(d) In order to maintain beneficiary access to prescription drug services, no later than 30 days after the department initially implements selling price as a component of estimated acquisition cost, pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), the department shall make a one-time adjustment to the dispensing fees paid to pharmacy providers in accordance with paragraph (1) of subdivision (b). This change shall only be made if selling price results in a lower aggregate drug reimbursement. Any increase in dispensing fee made pursuant to this subdivision shall not exceed the aggregate savings associated with the implementation of selling price. At least 30-days prior to implementing the dispensing fee increase, the department shall issue a copy of the department's request for federal approval pursuant to subdivision (e), to the chairperson in each house that considers appropriations and the Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, or whatever lesser time the Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee or his or her designee may determine.

(e) The director shall implement this section in a manner that is consistent with federal Medicaid law and regulations. The director shall seek any necessary federal approvals for the implementation of this section. This section shall be implemented only to the extent that federal approval is obtained.

~~(f) Notwithstanding Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, the department may take the actions specified in this section by means of a provider bulletin or notice, policy letter, or other similar instructions, without taking regulatory action.~~

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(f) The department shall issue a Medi-Cal pharmacy reimbursement fact sheet to the chairperson of the committee in each house of the Legislature that considers appropriations no later than March 1, 2008. The reimbursement fact sheet shall contain, but not be limited to, available data and information regarding the change in reimbursement due to the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 implementation of average manufacturer's price based federal upper limits, the implementation of selling price, change in the average wholesale price reported to the department by the primary price reference source, change in pharmacy dispensing fees, prescription drug volume trends, and the number of active Medi-Cal pharmacy providers. The fact sheet shall also contain general information and definitions regarding drug pricing terminology and a description of pharmacy claims processing in Medi-Cal.

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